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Shahbazi, M., Sanders, R., McCabe, C., & Adams, D. (2007). Investigating correlations between swim pike turn kinematics variables in front crawl. In H-J. Menzel, & M. H. Chagas (Eds.), *Unknown Host Publication* (pp. 381-384). Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais.

[Link to publication record in Ulster University Research Portal](#)

Published in:
Unknown Host Publication

Publication Status:
Published (in print/issue): 01/01/2007

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

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INVESTIGATING CORRELATIONS BETWEEN SWIM PIKE TURN KINEMATICS VARIABLES IN FRONT CRAWL

Shahbazi, M.M., Sanders, R.H. **, McCabe, C. ** and Adams, D. **, *

*School of Physics, University of Tehran

**Centre for Aquatic Research and Education, the University of Edinburgh, UK

Eight experienced swimmers were volunteered to this study. During three steps freestyle pike turns, selected kinematic variables of the pike turn such as; speed in, speed out, time in and time out, rotation and streamlining times were recorded. Kinematics were calculated from underwater videography. Correlations between these variables showed that there were good relations between speed-in and wall contact time ($R^2 = 0.356$), time-in and speed-in ($R^2 = 0.815$), and time-out and speed-out ($R^2 = 0.997$). Contrary to our expectations, other kinematic variables did not seem to have good relations mainly because there was the inherent variation in swimmers' turning techniques.

Key words: correlations, kinematic variables, pike turn, front crawl

INTRODUCTION:

So far there has been many researches on push-off, glide, and stroke resumption phases; Shahbazi et al. (2004), Lyttle et al. (1999, 1997), Blanksby et al. (1998, 1996), Sanders&Byatt-Smith (2003). However, little is known about the mechanics of an effective turn technique. Nevertheless, Shahbazi et al. (2005, 2006) studied the pike turn mechanism through mathematical and mechanical modelling. Despite the importance of turns in the overall performance for competitive swimming, relatively few studies have been carried out. This is probably because there are no simple, accurate and versatile investigatory methods available. This study examined the relationship between various kinematic measures and the 7.5-m round trip turn times (7.5-m RTT) for freestyle turns. This study also examined the reliability of the proposed study during tumbling and the consistency of temporal and kinematic aspects of swimmers' turning performance.

Execution of a tumble turn requires a swimmer complete a series of complex movements to allow them to change direction. Descriptions of tumble turn technique and performance are found to vary slightly within the literature. Costill et al. (1992) described the process of performing a flip or tumble turn using five separate movement phases. These five turn phases are the approach; the turn; the push-off; the glide; and the pull-out. Maintaining swim speed is considered an important component of the approach to the turn.

According to Costill et al. (1992), the turn phase incorporates the somersault change of direction movement. To achieve this, the swimmer keeps the opposite arm in the water at the hip when beginning the final arm stroke. Forward rotation of the body is initiated by flexion of the head and a simultaneous small dolphin kick, during the final arm stroke. The legs are drawn to the chest by flexing the hips and knees. This movement causes a decrease in the moment of inertia around the axis of rotation, allowing the swimmer to somersault more easily.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to use an underwater videography to investigate the interrelationship of various kinematic variables with the swimmers 7.5-m RTT pike turns. A greater understanding of these relationships will enable identification of good pike turn strategies.

METHODS:

Eight experienced adult male swimmers served as subjects for the study. The swimmers performed six complete freestyle turns and glides at maximum speed, beginning 10 meters from the wall. To analyze the pike turn, selected kinematic variables of the pike turn such as; speed in, speed out, time in and time out, rotation and streamlining times were recorded. As

we sought in this study to examine features that contributed to the pike turn process, rather than the sole push-off, a 7.5-m RTT was selected as criterion measure. The fastest 7.5-m RTT for each subject was selected for analysis. The push-off time represented the period from the first forward displacement of the hips after wall contact until the feet left the wall, while the contact time represented the period from the moment first feet touched the wall until the feet left the wall. Video data of swimmers may be collected in various ways provided that the camera is viewing from below the water surface. All data for our kinematic study were collected using fixed camera. A JVC handycam sampling at 50Hz was at 3m from the plane of motion of swimmers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

A limitation when analyzing any performance is that the selected parameters may not be those which contribute most to performance. However, we have chosen the kinematic measures which might be important for the coaches for examination. Table 1 shows the means and the standard deviations of the kinematic values. Final push-off velocities recorded in this study were higher than the peak outgoing velocities reported by Blanksby et al. (1996) but lower than those reported by Takahashi et al. (1982). On Figure 1 the correlations between the kinematic variables are shown. As can be seen, there were no relations between rotation time and speed in ($R^2 = 0.014$) and out ($R^2 = 0.001$), while we were expecting to get reasonable relation between speed-in and rotation time. Because with higher speed-in, the rotation should be performed faster and therefore the lesser time of rotation. This might come from the fact that there was the inherent variation in swimmers' turning techniques. As we had no force plate, therefore we were not able to find out the percentage of push-off time of the total wall contact time. According to Lyttle et al. (1999), the relative push-off time may range from 33 to 94% of the wall contact time.

Table 1 kinematic variables: Mean \pm SD

Variables	Time-in (s)	Time-out (s)	Contact time (s)	Rotation time (s)	Streaml.time (s)	Speed-in (m/s)	Speed-out (m/s)
Mean	4.60	3.12	0.23	0.97	0.19	1.61	2.42
\pm SD	± 0.19	± 0.18	± 0.04	± 0.08	± 0.03	± 0.23	± 0.26

There was good relation between speed-in and wall time contact ($R^2 = 0.356$), while the relation between speed-out and wall contact time was very poor ($R^2 = 0.03$). This finding highlights that the relative wall contact time spent pushing off in this study was a small portion of the total wall contact time. According to Lyttle et al (1999), the longer wall push-off times results in faster final push-off velocities for the swimmers. A rapid push-off might not allow sufficient time to develop an optimal impulse thus reducing the potential to effectively increase the acceleration of CG.

Good relations were found between speed-in and wall contact time ($R^2 = 0.356$), time-in and speed-in ($R^2 = 0.815$), and time-out and speed-out ($R^2 = 0.997$). There was also a reasonable correlation between wall contact time and streamlining time showing that the swimmers tried to get faster streamlining by losing appropriate time on the wall for getting a better push-off velocity. Contrary to our expectations, other kinematic variables did not show good relations mainly because there was the inherent variation in swimmers' turning techniques. Discussion of 7.5m RTT and variables correlated with this criterion measure provides further insight into factors that may affect a successful pike turn. It is hoped that future studies will clarify important features of the kinematic variables of the pike turn and examine the effects of various interventions.

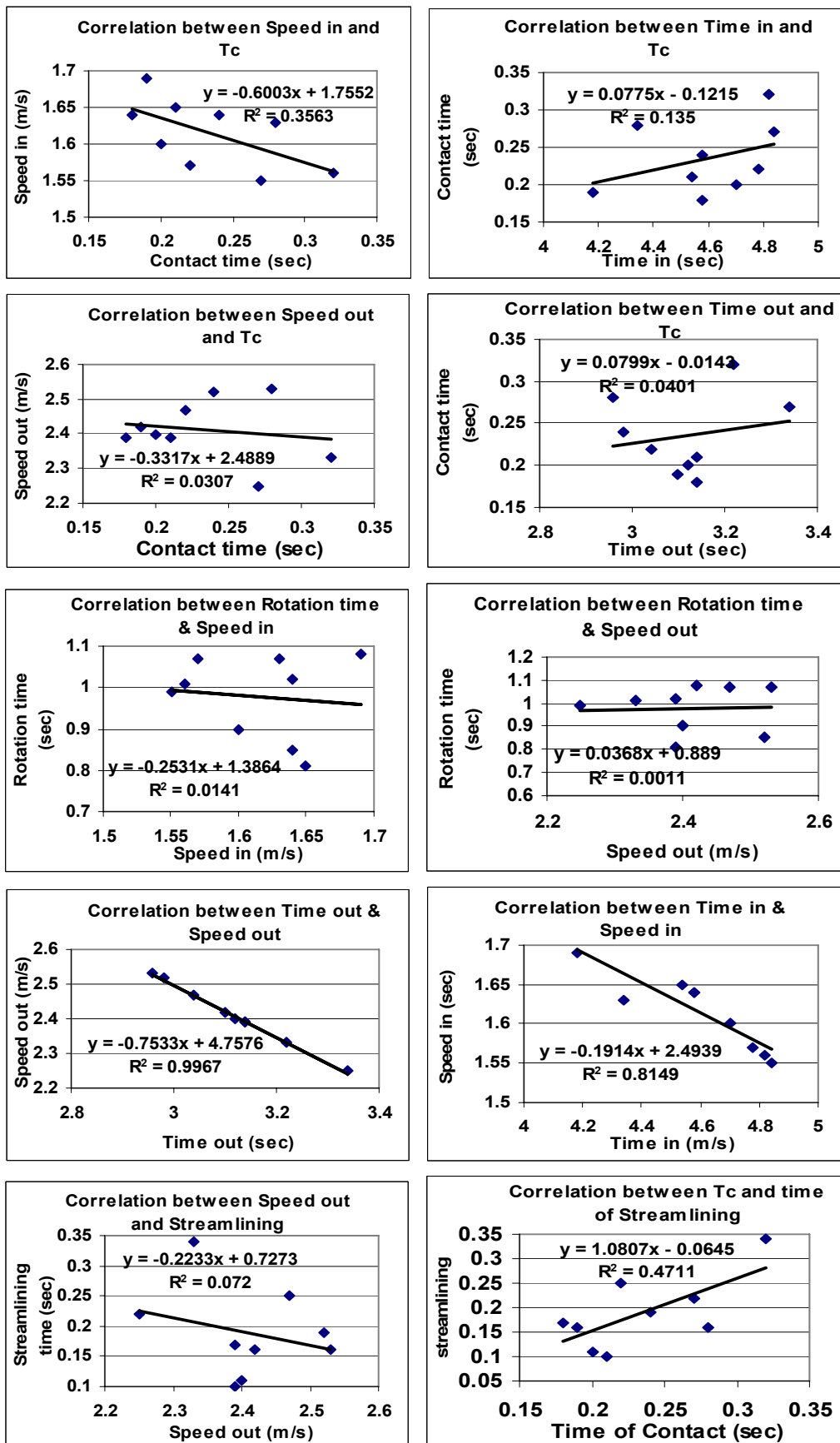


Figure 1 The relations between kinematic variables are depicted. As is seen, the Inherent variation in swimmers' turning techniques caused unexpected poor relations between some variables.

CONCLUSION:

As little has been written regarding pike turn mechanism, and the correlations between the kinematic variables, therefore the purpose of the present study was to find out the correlations between the kinematic variable measures identified in the coaching literature as being important for examination. We have not obtained good relations between all variables because of the fact that there was the inherent variation in swimmers' turning techniques. But greater understanding of these relationships will enable identification of good pike turn strategies. Nevertheless, it is hoped that future studies will clarify important features of the kinematic variables of the pike turn and examine the effects of various interventions.

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